

Coming soon:
An Evening at the Fort!

FORT FISHER STATE HISTORIC SITE

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

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Upcoming WWII program to tell the story of Fort Fisher's lesser-known history

Shortly after Fort Fisher's Junior Reserves programs and Beat the Heat lectures wrap up in mid-August, the site will turn its attention to another signature event that pays tribute to the fort's lesser-known World War II history.

Join us Saturday, October 12, 2019, from 10 am to 4 pm, as we examine Fort Fisher's role as an Anti-Aircraft Artillery Training facility during World War II.

Military and civilian reenactors will set up displays on the old Fort Fisher airstrip and will be available to discuss his-

toric weapons and the life of the World War II soldier, as well as family life on the home front.

Among other things, the program will accentuate the contributions of the Women's Airforce Services Pilots (WASP) program and the critical role these women carried out during the 1940s. Throughout the day, guest speakers will discuss World War II topics in the Spencer Theater located inside the Fort Fisher visitor center.

Other special activities include jeep rides in an authentic 1942 Willys jeep (a small donation is requested) and the Toy

Soldier Workshop, at which kids can paint toy soldiers and learn about military uniforms and equipment.

The program is free and open to the public. All program components are subject to change due to unforeseen factors.

All Fort Fisher programming is made possible by the Friends of Fort Fisher and its sustaining members, as well as by generous support from the town of Carolina Beach and the town of Kure Beach.

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From the Site Manager, Jim Steele...

Dear Friends:

Here is an amazing number: **949,920**. That is how many people visited Fort Fisher State Historic Site in fiscal year 2019, which is a new record! Since 2007, we have consistently tracked visitation with electronic traffic counters, and our visitation that year was 552,800. Every year since then, the count has grown.

This 72% increase in visitation over twelve years mirrors the growth of our regional tourism economy, and Fort Fisher is a key part of that industry. It also reinforces our commitment to do more and better for our visitors in telling the history of Fort Fisher. Because we anticipate over one million visitors a year in the very near future, we are excited at the progress being made towards building a new visitor center and a replica earthwork exhibit.

Fort Fisher is engaged in detailed design for these new facilities, working with the Raleigh-based architectural firm ClarkNexsen. We are also working with the Richmond-based Riggs Ward Design team on new exhibits. If all goes as planned, we can expect construction drawings this winter and look to break ground in the summer of 2020! We have approximately two-thirds of our construction funding in place, and the Friends of Fort Fisher are working to raise money for the exhibits. We need your help to make it all happen.

If you love Fort Fisher and Civil War history, you need to join the Friends of Fort Fisher today! The Friends make our educational programming possible and are a powerful lobbying voice. Without their support, our plans would just be a dream. We need to grow the organization, to increase its influence and fundraising potential. If you are already a member, please encourage your friends and family to join, and consider upgrading your own membership level. Your voice and support are crucial to ensure we can make Fort Fisher the premier Civil War battlefield in the country. We here at the "Rebel Gibraltar" thank you!

Sincerely,
Jim Steele

And the

WINNER

is...



Daniel Foley of New City, NY

The Friends of Fort Fisher wish to congratulate Daniel Foley of New City, New York, who was the lucky winner of the Friends' 2019 Civil War playset raffle. Upon taking delivery of the playset, Daniel was kind enough to provide us with a photo of a temporary cease-fire, as shown here. At ease, men. Thanks and congratulations, Daniel!

FORT FISHER

Cannonball

Comes home

By Jim Steele

People often bring things to Fort Fisher they wish to donate for display in our exhibits. These items are often interesting and useful artifacts that fit right into our collection. Sometimes they are not, being things like Grandma's butter churn or very-bad Civil War art. And occasionally they are real gems. Such was the case last September. Mr. John Glancy of Blackstone, Virginia brought us artifacts he collected with his father Robert from Fort Fisher back in the 1960s. Mr. Glancy explained they came to Fort Fisher and visually searched areas where construction was underway and found a fair number of historic items. When the senior Mr. Glancy recently passed, his son found the artifact collection in his father's garage and decided to return it to Fort Fisher.

Mr. Glancy emptied a few 5-gallon pails of old iron onto our conference room table. Most of it was routine finds: shell fragments; nails and bolts; a World War II-era shovel. But what floored us was a whole cannonball! The cannonball was a 12-pounder shell or case shot, in excellent condition with a Bormann time fuse. Stuck to the cannonball was a piece of ancient masking tape on which was written "Fort Fisher." And best of all, the fuse had been set for a 5-second delay. Clearly this shot was a dud, but it was still a "hot" piece of ordnance. Artifact conservator Nathan Henry of the Underwater Archaeology Branch directed us to place the projectile in a bucket of water in our powder magazine until we could arrange to disarm it.

US Marine Corps Staff Sergeant Chris Leonard and his team of Emergency Ordnance Disposal experts at Camp Lejeune came to our rescue. At their facility, the team drilled a hole into the casing and flushed the projectile of its powder charge and finished by internally burning out any residue. Nathan Henry confirmed that the 12-pounder round was in fact a shell and not a case shot. He also cleaned and conserved the shell, which has been formally accessioned into our collection by the NC Historical Commission. To have this 12-pounder shell, with its solid Fort Fisher provenance, is a delight and it will find its way into our permanent exhibits.

We have speculated how this 12-pounder shell was employed at Fort Fisher. The fort's armament included three 12-pounder field cannons, or "Napoleons," and they were used against Union troops on January 15, 1865 during the climactic battle of Fort Fisher. Emplaced at the Center and River Road sally ports, they inflicted fearful casualties on Federal soldiers, sailors and marines. However, it does not seem likely that our shell was fired by any of these guns. First, the shell was found in the interior of Fort Fisher, not north of the fort from where the Union forces attacked. Second, the fuse is set for five seconds, which is about right for a mile-long shot. Fort Fisher's Napoleons engaged the Federal troops with cannister and case shot at close range. And finally, the Bormann time fuse is Federal manufacture, not the Confederate version. In all probability, our 12-pounder shell was fired from a boat howitzer by the Union Navy. The Official Record only lists heavy ordnance expended by the fleet bombarding Fort Fisher, but it would not be surprising for the sailors to fire every gun they had on deck.

Fort Fisher State Historic Site is thankful to Mr. Glancy for donating this cannonball and associated artifacts. The shell fills a gap in our collection, and displayed in our exhibits, it will be enjoyed by visitors for years to come. As we plan exhibits for a new interpretive center, please let us know if you have Civil War and particularly Fort Fisher-related artifacts in your possession. We would love to see them and will gladly accept your donation of artifacts that help us tell the story of Fort Fisher. And rest assured, although relic hunting is prohibited on state property these days, we will not be concerned that an artifact may have been picked up here many years ago. We will be pleased to have it back in the public domain and thankful for your generosity.

But please, no butter churns!



Do ya feel lucky?
Don't miss your chance to win the
Well, do ya..?
Friends of Fort Fisher revolver raffle

The Friends of Fort Fisher Small Arms Raffle is providing a unique opportunity for Civil War weapons enthusiasts and black powder shooters. This year's raffle features a set of Civil War reproduction revolvers - the Colt "Army" Model 1860 and the Remington New Model Army. In addition to the revolvers, this raffle comes in a custom handcrafted wooden display case, with a powder flask, a brass .44 caliber bullet mold, and a brass container for caps (caps not included).

During the 1840s and 1850s, revolvers like the five pound Colt Walker and the only slightly lighter Colt Dragoon series of handguns, were meant for mounted soldiers and could not be easily carried on a belt. Based on their experiences prior to the Civil War, the US Army wanted a revolver that was light enough for a soldier to carry but utilized the larger .44 caliber bore with its proven stopping power. Small arms manufacturers, Colt and Remington, looked to meet the Army's requirements by continuously improving the design features of their successful revolvers and the quality of the steel used in weapons manufacturing.

Colt had produced a successful revolver for the US Navy using a .36 caliber bore. Using the 1851 "Navy" frame as a starting point, they were able to marry the Colt Navy's carry ability with the Army's .44 caliber stopping power needs. This new revolver was designated the Colt "Army" Model 1860. It had several positive features including an improved rack and pinion loading lever, the barrel separating from the frame for cleaning, and having half the weight of the Colt pistols then in US Army service. The strength of the revolver came from the lower frame and the massive fixed cylinder pin. This made the gun slimmer and lighter than its main competitor, the Remington Model 1858. During the Civil War, the US Government purchased over 129,000 Colt Army revolvers making it the most widely used revolver of the Civil War. But on February 4, 1864, a fire destroyed the Colt factory forcing the U.S. government to order large numbers of the Remington revolvers.

The Remington New Model Army is commonly referred to as the Model 1858 due to the patent markings on its cylinder. But wide scale production did not start until 1861 and improvements on the revolver continued following suggestions from the U. S. Ordnance Department. While it was more expensive to produce, it had some advantages over the Colt. Those who could afford it, remarked on its durability due to the "topstrap," or steel bar running above the cylinder, that made for a solid-frame design. This made the Remington less prone to issues arising from stress on the frame due to firing. The downside in this single piece design was not being able to remove the barrel for cleaning. But the Remington permitted easy cylinder removal, allowing a quick reload with a spare pre-loaded cylinder. It is, however, unlikely that this was common practice, as spare cylinders were not provided. Another innovative feature, which first appeared in the 1863 Model, were "safety slots" milled between chambers on the cylinder. The milled slot positively secured the hammer between chambers for safe carry by placing the hammer's firing pin between percussion caps, eliminating the risk of an accidental discharge.

Together, Colt and Remington revolvers made up almost three quarters of the hand guns used during the Civil War. Soldiers and sailors, on both sides of the conflict at Fort Fisher, used these revolvers during the two battles. The raffle drawing will be held Sunday, January 19, 2020, at the conclusion of the 155th Second Battle of Fort Fisher Commemoration program.

Tickets only \$5 each



Colt "Army" Model 1860



Remington New Model Army

Part 3/Conclusion:

Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Col. William Lord DeRosset and the 3rd NC at Sharpsburg

By Ray Flowers,
Curator of History

It is conjectured that in little more than three hours' time, that one side or the other had charged across Miller's farm no less than fifteen times, trampling the stalks of maize into the now fallow field, while yielding a cornucopia of death. Among the flotsam and jetsam of battle debris approximately 8,000 men littered the contested ground. Yet the fight was far from over; in the wake of the lull, the firing reignited with a ferocity that raged throughout the day. Incredulously, the 3rd was ordered back to the front to cloak a negligee portion of

"Bobby" Lee's line, where they lost another handful of men. By day's end, with the battle fought to a draw and having mingled their precious blood with nearly 23,000 others, the 3rd Regiment North Carolina State Troops would boast the dubious distinction of having lost more men than any other Confederate regiment on the bloodiest day in American history.

By the end of September, Wilmington, already in the murderous

grasp of "Bronze John" (Yellow Fever), began to receive official notification of the Sharpsburg casualties. One contemporary Cape Fear historian would write that, "the whole air was filled with the wail of the widow and the orphan..." The Wilmington Journal would note that, "Distressed and bereaved by this new

anemic Confederacy now "robbing the cradle and the grave", he accepted a colonelcy in the Invalid Corps where he served until the surrender. The 3rd of course had carried on in his absence, losing another 700 men in three engagements at Chancellorsville, Gettys-

burg and Spotsylvania alone. It was observed at one point that while on the march this once proud unit was, "so much reduced that the major at the head of the column and the assistant surgeon, at the foot, could carry on a conversation without effort." When Lee surrendered at Appomattox in April of 1865 there were fifty-eight men present. Inexplicably, some-

how or another the "Old North State Flag," that had survived the Battle of Sharpsburg and was later presented to the governor, wound up back in DeRosset's possession. In 1914, four years after the Colonel's passing, his son donated the flag back to the state where it now resides in the North Carolina Museum of History, an emblem of the tremendous sacrifice, patriotism and bravery that they exhibited on a day of unprecedented carnage!



weight of sorrow, Wilmington sat in the mournful habiliments of widowhood, striving, amidst the immensity of the struggle, to make her courageous voice heard above all the din of war..."

Miraculously, Colonel DeRosset survived; however, the following September, after a long convalescence, his wound forced him to resign his commission with the 3rd. Back in Wilmington and unable to return to active duty, he turned his attention to blockade running as an alternative means of aiding and abetting the Southern war effort. But by January 1865, with the

Continued on page 10

newsletter

Friends of Fort Fisher updates



Stephanie Hofinga

Meet Stephanie!

Please welcome the newest member of the Friends of Fort Fisher family! Stephanie Hofinga joined the FOFF staff as our bookkeeper earlier this year. She is a certified public bookkeeper and comes to us most recently from Chesapeake, VA, where she worked for the Tidewater Officers' Spouses' Support Association and the Tidewater Collection, which raises funds in support of organizations that assist the military family. She and her husband, who serves as a Marine Corp Infantry Captain at Camp Lejeune, have two daughters, ages 3 and 5. Stephanie says her "affinity for nonprofits and numbers," as well as her interest in history, inspired her to join FOFF as our bookkeeper.

Friends host walk & talk with Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Jr.

Friends of Fort Fisher hosted Chris Fonvielle back in May for a special talk and tour. Using his book, *Fort Fisher 1865 The Photographs of T.H. O'Sullivan*, Fonvielle examined the only known photos of the Fort taken shortly after its fall. He gave background on the Wilmington Campaign, recounted the two battles of Fort Fisher and then, with pictures in hand, showed us where, against today's landscape, O'Sullivan's took his photographs nearly 155 years ago. It was an entertaining and insightful afternoon! The event was open to the public and Friends of Fort Fisher received a 25% discount on the tickets. Proceeds contributed to the Friends' mission to support Fort Fisher State Historic Site.

Keep an eye out for news of Friends of Fort Fisher's next event: *An Evening at the Fort*, a food and libations event with a night time cannon firing for FOFF members only. Members of the Palisades Society, our individual membership category, will be eligible to purchase one ticket and members of all other societies will be eligible to purchase tickets for their household family members. Coming this Fall!



Dr. Chris E. Fonvielle, Jr. shares stories of the fort with the crowd.



friends of fort fisher updates

Fort Fisher State Historic Site relies on Friends' dues and donations for educational programming, as well as for some staffing, maintenance and exhibit funding. Every dollar you give makes a significant impact at the fort. You make our mission possible! If you haven't yet renewed, please do so today. Fort Fisher State Historic Site is counting on you. You can sign up online at www.friendsoffortfisher.com. Thank you new and returning FOF members for the months of February-June 2019:



Col. Charles F. Fisher Society

Troy & Lori Barbour



Blockade Runner Society

Worthy Kenner

Mounds Society



**John Allred
Richard Brandes
Louis Burney, Jr.
Cape Fear Riverboats, Inc.
Del Clark
Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Jr.**

**Benjamin Graham
Geoff Losee
Stephen & Julie Ryan
Stephen Shepherd
Michael Spaulding
Geoffrey & Mary Williams**



Palisade Society

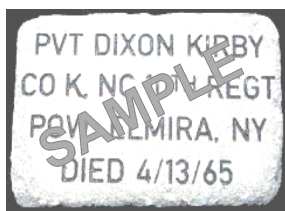
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North Topsail
Elementary School
Fourth Grade

\$100-\$499

Julie & Stephen Ryan
Cape Fear
Chapter of AACA

In-kind Donations

Walter Bullard, Jr.—Framed Civil War limited edition print
Carter Lambeth—Two framed photos of 1931 Battle Acre dedication ceremony
Harry & Susan Parham—Two full-sized mannequins

JOIN NOW!

Friends of Fort Fisher, Inc. Membership Levels

Palisade Society – individual level of annual support. Your benefits include a Friends of Fort Fisher decal, recognition in The Powder Magazine quarterly newsletter, 10% discount on all purchases from our Fort Fisher Museum Shop, event discounts, and invitations to special member-only events.

Mounds Society - annual support with benefits applied to two adults in the same household. Benefits includes all of the above, plus one complimentary honorarium or memorial in one issue of The Powder Magazine newsletter and up to 20% off your Courtyard by Marriott at Carolina Beach stay.

Blockade Runner Society - annual support includes all of the above benefits plus a 6" x 9" engraved brick paver on Fort Fisher's Walk of Honor and a 20% discount off a special event site rental (no more than 1x per year).

Gibraltar of the South Society - annual support which includes all of the above benefits, but with a larger 9" x 9" engraved brick paver and the addition of a specially selected annual gift from the Museum Shop, and two complimentary tickets to our Evening at the Fort event, with a night-time cannon firing (must RSVP).

Col. Charles F. Fisher Society - annual support which includes all of the benefits of the Gibraltar level except with a beautiful premium engraved blue/gray 12" x 12" paver stone which may include an engraved emblem or logo and four complimentary tickets to our Evening at the Fort event, with a night-time cannon firing (must RSVP).

Other ways to contribute: Memorial and Honor Gifts, Artifact Donations, In-Kind Gifts, Volunteers, Named Gift Opportunities, Bequests – Contact the Friends Executive Director for information .

Annual Membership Society Categories

Palisade Society.....	\$40
Mounds Society.....	\$100
Blockade Runner Society.....	\$250
Gibraltar of the South Society...	\$500
Col. Charles F. Fisher Society....	\$1000

All society memberships are based on a calendar year (Jan-Dec). Contributions are tax deductible, less the fair market value of goods and services received. If you choose to waive society membership benefits, your contributions are fully tax-deductible. **Address questions to Executive Director, email cdivoky@friendsoffortfisher.com**

Visit www.friendsoffortfisher.com and click on the membership page.

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Ray Flowers, Historic Interpreter II

Si Lawrence, Public Info & Special Events

William S. Register, Chief of Police

David Sheaffer, Maintenance Manager

Jesse Hoskins, Site Assistant

Conclusion of Day of Unprecedented Carnage: Col. William Lord DeRosset & the 3rd NC at Sharpsburg

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That night at Sharpsburg after the battle, an errand carried one of Jackson's staff officers across Miller's farm where the 3rd, and so many others, had fought and died. The first-person impression that he recorded for posterity is timeless: "...I went off the pike and was compelled to go through a field ... over which, to and fro, the pendulum of battle had swung several times that day. It was a dreadful scene, a veritable field of blood. The dead and dying lay as thick over it as harvest sheaves. The pitiable cries for water and appeals for help were much more horrible to listen to than the deadliest sounds of battle. Silent were the dead, motionless. But here and there were raised stiffened arms; heads made a last effort to lift themselves from the ground; prayers were mingled with oaths, the oaths of delirium; men were wriggling over the earth; and midnight hid all distinction between the blue and the grey. My horse trembled under me in terror, looking down at the ground, sniffing the scent of blood, stepping falteringly as a horse will over or by the side of human flesh; afraid to stand still, hesitating to go on, his animal instinct shuddering at this cruel human mystery. Once his foot slid into a shallow filled with blood and spurted a little stream on his legs and my boots. I had had my surfeit of blood that day and I couldn't stand this. I dismounted and giving the reins to my courier I started on foot into the wood of Dunker Church."

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